DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 398 639 EA 027 810

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TITLE A Process for Restructuring Service Delivery Models for Inclusion in New York State.
SPONS AGENCY Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Dec 95
CONTRACT H086J00007
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (51st, New Orleans, LA, March 16-19, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Delivery Systems; Educational Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inclusive Schools; Mainstreaming; *Regular and Special Education Relationship; School Restructuring; *Special Education; Special Needs Students; Student Placement; Teaching Load
IDENTIFIERS *New York

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a process for restructuring service-delivery models for inclusion in New York State schools. The process is based on several assumptions, some of which include: (1) Home-zone school placement or choice/magnet school options are the preferred placement for special education students; (2) inclusion models must restructure special and general education programs; (3) inclusive service delivery will require systemic restructuring of staffing and resource patterns; (4) restructuring efforts must include coordination and collaboration with other entitlement and discretionary programs; (5) restructuring may require flexible interpretations to address the intent of current fiscal and regulatory mechanisms; (6) restructuring will entail new roles and relationships; (7) plans should be developed by a team of the major stakeholders who will be affected by the change; and (8) special education teachers will have caseloads comprised of heterogeneous students that reflect normalized grade-level assignments. The paper also offers a list of questions for gathering background information and identifies restructuring issues--some of which include working with parents, assigning students, clarifying classroom roles, and developing collaborative-planning activities. The appendix contains sample teacher caseloads and daily schedules for elementary and middle schools. (LMI)

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ED 398 639

New York Partnership for Statewide Systems Change Project

A PROCESS FOR RESTRUCTURING SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS FOR INCLUSION IN NEW YORK STATE

by

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December 1995
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Development of this module was supported in part by the New York Partnership for Statewide Systems Change, a collaborative project of the New York State Education Department and Syracuse University, funded by Grant #H086J00007 from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the position or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, or the New York State Education Department, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT RESTRUCTURING

This process for restructuring service delivery models for inclusion is based on a number of assumptions about educational restructuring efforts in general and inclusion in particular. This section presents these assumptions and their underlying rationales.

- Home-zone school placement or choice/magnet school options available to students not receiving special education services are the preferred placement for students receiving special education services and supports. This is critical because of implications for both students (membership in one's community, predictability of feeder patterns, development of long term social relationships with peers, and basic civil rights) and the school (reinforcing building-level ownership of students and approximating of natural proportions of students with disabilities in each classroom/school).

- Inclusion is a strategy of addressing students' IEP needs in the context of age-appropriate general education classrooms and schools through the provision of special education support services to students in the general education environment.

- We must move beyond inclusion models that do not involve restructuring special and general education systems. Inclusion must not be limited to add-on programs separate from the need for restructuring limited resources for general school improvement. We must move beyond reliance on charismatic leadership and teacher deals, student-by-student arrangement made to satisfy only the most vocal and skilled parent advocates, and reliance on models that are not cost-effective or replicable on a larger systems level.

- Achieving inclusion will require systemic restructuring of staffing and resource patterns. The most pragmatic way to start this restructuring effort is to begin with the assumption that we will work within the currently allocated resources (e.g., money, staffing, space) generated by students in the present service delivery model. In other words, we should work with and reallocate what we have, not assume we can secure more resources. What will be different, however, is that what we have must return to the general school community to enable all students to receive the benefits of these resources.

- Restructured service models will utilize special education teacher support caseloads of students that are heterogeneous in their makeup and reflect normalized grade level assignments. These caseloads should reflect natural proportions of students with disabilities in the school population. For example, a special educator's caseload would most likely include a few students with "significant" disabilities, more with "moderate" disabilities and most with "mild" disabilities at each grade level.

- Restructuring efforts must include coordination and collaboration with other entitlement and discretionary programs such as Title I, compensatory education, and services for students who speak English as a Second Language. This might involve merging and sharing of resources and/or careful scheduling to avoid unnecessary overlapping of services.

- Restructuring will require a thoughtful balance of "clustering" students who require special education supports and services in general education classrooms in order to generate real "presence" of special education services and special educators within classrooms, while at the same time addressing the principle of maintaining natural proportions of students with special needs in general education classrooms. This tension and potential conflict should be directly articulated and addressed.

- At this historical point in time, efforts may require flexible interpretations to address the intent of current fiscal and regulatory mechanisms. Districts should not be fiscally punished for "doing the right thing." Districts should work closely with the State Education Department officials responsible for monitoring and providing technical assistance to determine whether program waivers should be requested for innovative restructuring efforts. These program waivers should be granted on a performance basis.

- Restructuring will entail new roles and relationships that go beyond the traditional general vs. special education dichotomy, and will require new models of personnel preparation and staff development for consultative, collaborative, and supervisory roles and responsibilities in the classroom. Higher education will need to reflect these changes in teacher preparation programs at the preserve level. Districts must design staff development plans to provide the necessary inservice training to prepare personnel for new roles and responsibilities.

- Restructuring plans should be developed by a team of the major stakeholders who will be affected by the changes. This team should work together to gather background information, make restructuring decisions, and follow-through with implementation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO BE GATHERED

1. What is the service delivery unit that you will start your restructuring efforts with? Will you restructure several classrooms, a grade level, one or more interdisciplinary teams, multi-grade teams, a "house," or an entire school building? How comprehensive of a restructuring effort can you undertake and still have a high probability for success?

2. Are any district students missing from your service delivery unit? For example, are there any students who should attend this school but are instead enrolled in a self-contained or cluster program elsewhere? If so, where are these students and how will you address them in your planning activities? Similarly, are there students who should attend another school, but are instead attending a cluster program in the school you are restructuring? How will you address these students in your planning activities?

3. What is the school and district timetable for making inclusive options available to all students? As long as inclusion is limited to selected students, classes, grades, subject areas, teams, houses, or schools, the district has not yet achieved quality inclusive schooling.

4. Who are the students who will participate in the initial restructured service delivery unit:

_____ Total number of students (general and special education) in unit to be restructured

_____ Total number of students receiving special education services

_____ Receiving "special class" level of service

_____ Receiving "resource" level of service

_____ Receiving "consultant" level of service

_____ Total number of students receiving remedial education services

_____ Total number of students receiving English as a Second Language services

_____ Total number of students receiving other services (specify):

5. Are there other specialized personnel available who should participate in the restructuring process (e.g., teachers on special assignment for curricular support roles)?

6. How many classrooms (elementary level) or subject area classroom spaces (middle and high school) will be available for use by the restructured service delivery unit?

7. Compile information about all students receiving special education who will be served in the service delivery unit that you are restructuring. This information will allow you to create a service weighting for each student based on the level of services that student received in his/her previous placement. These service weightings will allow you to construct teacher caseloads that reflect the intensity of individual student needs.

Name/Age/Grade Level	Current Level/Types of Service	Service Weighting ***	Comments/Needs

*** Please see next page for information regarding service weightings.

7. (continued)

This section presents additional information about determining service weightings for students and documenting the levels of service that determine excess cost aid provided to school. Answers to common questions are presented.

How can we translate a student's current IEP service to an inclusive service weighting?

Service from Most Recent IEP	Translation to Service Weighting
Resource & Consultant.....	1/20th (or 1/25th at the secondary level) of a teacher caseload
"Special Class".....	1/15th, 1/12th, 1/8th, 1/6th of a teacher caseload plus service weighting of paraprofessional support that are allocated to specified "special class" groupings. For example a 12: 1&1 IEP service indicates the support of 1/12th of a teacher caseload plus 1/12th of a paraprofessional caseload
Related Services.....	Itemize time, frequency and group size of each service
1:1 Paraprofessionals.....	In some instances, individual students have 1:1 paraprofessionals specified on their IEP because of intensive medical, health, or behavioral support needs. These services should be directly translated to the new service delivery model

How can we make sure that we don't lose money for providing the same level of service to students in a more inclusive environment?

To maintain current New York State excess cost funding levels it is necessary to document the maintenance of levels of special education services and supports within the restructured service delivery system. The point is not where a student receives the service/support, but the amount of time the service/support is provided.

60% of the school day.....	1.7 Excess Cost Aid Weighting (Special Class level of service)
20 – 60% of the school day.....	.9 Excess Cost Aid Weighting (Consultant/Resource level of service)
Up to 20% of the school day.....	.13 Excess Cost Aid Weighting (Related Services Only level of service)

What special education services count towards these percentages/times required to maintain appropriate excess cost weightings?

1) Time with special education teacher in teamed or collaborative setting (physical presence in room & IEP being addressed).

2) Time with special education teacher assistant in teamed or collaborative setting (physical presence in room & IEP being addressed).

3) Time with related service provider in teamed or collaborative setting (physical presence in room & IEP being addressed).

4) Any additional "pull out" special education services for IEP instruction.

This analysis is consistent with and based on Section 3602 (19) of New York State Education Law and Parts 100 & 200 of New York State Regulations.

Note - See the Appendix for examples of teachers caseloads and daily schedules. These were adapted from an earlier working model of this process develped by a Syracuse City School District Task Force.

Meyer, L.H., Lowengard, D., Davis, M., Wilkins, G., Mazzella, J., & Mangram, J. (1994). Inclusion models: Staffing patterns: Task Force Report. Available from Special Projects Materials, Syracuse University, 150 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, New York, 13244-2280.

8. **Currently Available Support Staff allocated to the service delivery unit or to individual students who will return to the school (e.g., general education, special education, related or support service, paraprofessionals, volunteers, administrators).**

Name	Position	Days/Time Allocated	Comments

RESTRUCTURING DECISION-MAKING

9. How will you restructure to support inclusive education?

After gathering the background information in the previous sections you are now ready to make some decisions about restructuring your service delivery model to support inclusion. The following guidelines will assist in decision-making:

- o Set up a team of all major stakeholders affected by the restructuring effort and a schedule of team meetings.
- o Review the attached list of restructuring issues. Identify and prioritize the most important and locally relevant issues that the team should focus on.
- o Work on one issue at a time. Brainstorm and select specific action strategies to address these issues. List your selected strategies/actions on the attached Restructuring Decision-Making Worksheet. Include person(s) responsible and a realistic timeline for action.
- o Communicate periodically, as part of your action planning, with relevant constituent groups in the school to insure open communication, input, and feedback.
- o Continue to identify issues and select action strategies. This process will likely need to continue into the implementation stage of your efforts.

RESTRUCTURING ISSUES

9.1 Working with parents regarding the restructuring process

9.2 Disposition of special education space/rooms

9.3 Addressing the issue of providing a "full continuum" and intensity of services for students

9.4 Assignment of staff/students

a. Natural proportions of students receiving special education services vs. clustering students for efficiency/intensity of service provision (acceptable groupings for instructional effectiveness)

b. Maximizing opportunities for Special Education presence (e.g. teaming) in general education classrooms

c. Heterogeneous caseloads

d. Caseload numbers

e. Use of paraprofessionals

f. Addressing 60% or more special education service provision for students funded at 1.7 excess cost aid and 20-60% service provision for students funded at .9 excess cost aid

g. Additional strategies to secure necessary resources and staffing

9.5 Coordination/relationship of special education and other entitlements (e.g., ESL, remedial services, gifted education)

9.6 Classroom roles: co-teaching, collaboration, consultation, and supervision of personnel (including paraprofessionals assigned to inclusive programs)

9.7 Implementation of current most promising practices in instruction

9.8 Collaborative planning activities

a. Common planning time for team members

b. Staff development on consultation and collaboration

c. Accountability & maintenance of the process

d. Ongoing review and revision of implementation efforts

e. Student performance evaluation

RESTRUCTURING DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET

ISSUE TO ADDRESS:

ACTION/STRATEGY STATEMENT	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE

APPENDIX: SAMPLE TEACHER CASELOADS AND DAILY SCHEDULES

Meyer, L.H., Lowengard, D., Davis, M., Wilkins, G., Mazzella, J., & Mangram, J. (1994). Inclusion models: Staffing patterns: Task Force Report. Available from Special Projects Materials, Syracuse University, 150 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, New York, 13244-2280.

Elementary School Examples

In an elementary school at the primary level, proportionately more of the identified students receiving special education services will have more significant disabilities. The overall percentage of students identified may start out small and increase across the school years. In grades K-3 the percentage might be as low as 8%, but many of those students would be receiving excess cost aid at the 60% or more level of services. Therefor, a special education teacher's load might be comprised primarily of students who would otherwise be found in self-contained programs.

Examples of Hypothetical Special Education Teacher Caseloads

Teacher A: This might be a teacher at K-1 grade level

Type of Service	Service Weighing	# of Students	% of Load
6:1&1 or 12:1&3	1/6	3	3/6 or .50
12:1	1/12	6	6/12 or .50
		9 Students	**1.0 FTE**

Teacher B: This might be a teacher at 1-3 or 4-5 grade level

Type of Service	Service Weighing	# of Students	% of Load
6: 1&1 or 12: 1&3	1/6	2	2/6 or .33
12:1	1/15	5	2/6 or .33
20:1	1/20	7	7/20 or .33
		15 Students	**1.0 FTE**

An inclusive elementary school model might assign special education teachers to chronological grade-range teams. For example, Teacher A might serve all students in three or four classrooms at grades K-1, Teacher B might serve all students in three to four classrooms at grades 1-3 or grades 4-5.

Middle School Examples

At middle school level, the proportion of students receiving special education and related services is likely to be higher than elementary. For example, of the 125 students on a typical middle school team, the percentage of students receiving special education services might be as high as 14% - 18%. If the percentage is 14%, one would expect to find 17 students on the team with disabilities. If the percentage is 10%, there would be approximately 12 students on the team.

Examples of Hypothetical Special Education Teacher Caseloads

Teacher A:

Type of Service	Service Weighing	# of Students	% of Load
6:1&1 or 12:1&3	1/6	2	2/6 or .33
12:1	1/15	4	4/15 or .27
25:1	1/25	10	10/25 or .40
		16 Students	**1.0 FTE**

Teacher B:

Type of Service	Service Weighing	# of Students	% of Load
6:1&1 or 12:1&3	1/6	1	1/6 or .17
12:1	1/15	7	7/15 or .46
25:1	1/25	9	9/25 or .36
		17 Students	**1.0 FTE**

Teacher C:

Type of Service	Service Weighing	# of Students	% of Load
6:1&1 or 12:1&3	1/6	3	3/6 or .50
12:1	1/15	4	4/15 or .27
25:1	1/25	5	5/25 or .20
		12 Students	**1.0 FTE**

Sample Configuration of a Middle School Team

Team: Four or five subject area teachers, 1 special education teacher, and 125 students, including 12-17 students receiving special education

Teachers:
1 Math
1 Social Studies
1 English
1 Science/Health (7th grade) or Science (8th grade)
1 to 1.5 Special Education, depending upon the number of students receiving special education services

Students:
103-115 students without disabilities
12-17 students receiving special education (as many as 22 students with disabilities would require adding an additional .5 FTE Special Education teacher on the team)

Sample Schedule I: Special Education Teacher and Teaching Assistant

Schedule: 6 period day

Teacher Caseload: (9) 25:1 students, (7) 12:1 students and (1) 6:1&1 student

Classroom: Special education room available at all times/periods for heterogeneous groups of students with and without disabilities

	Special Education Teacher	Teaching Assistant
1st period	in Spec. Ed. room	in English Class
2nd period	in Spec. Ed. room	in Math Class
3rd period	in Spec. Ed. room	in Science Class
4th period	Subject area room	in Spec. Ed. Room
5th period	Subject area room	in Spec. Ed. Room
6th period	Planning period with team	in Spec. Ed. Room

Sample Schedule II: Special Education Teacher and Teaching Assistant

Schedule:	6 period day
Teacher Caseload:	(9) 25:1 students, (7) 12:1 students, and (1) 6:1&1 students
Classroom:	Special Education Self-Contained taught during 2nd, 5th, and 6th periods. Room may also be available during 1st, 3rd, and 4th periods if staffed by therapist(s) or Teaching Assistant.
1st period	Planning period with other members of the team
2nd period	Self-Contained: (9) 25:1 Students + (4) 12:1 students + (1) 6:1&1 student and Teaching Assistant
3rd period	In general education class on team, with 12:1 and 25:1 students on rotating basis according to student/team support needs
4th period	In general education class on team, with 12:1 or 25:1 students on rotating basis according to student/team support needs
5th period	Teaching a section of Math: (7) 12:1 + 7 students from General Education + (1) 6:1&1 student
6th period	Teaching a section of Math: (7) 15:1 students + 7 General Education Students + (1) 6:1&1 student

The one available Teaching Assistant would be assigned to accompany the 6:1&1 student during periods 1-4, and would be available for support in general education classes during periods 5-6. In addition, therapy services can also contribute to availability of professional special education/related services in the general or special education classroom.

REFERENCES

Meyer, L.H., Lowengard, D., Davis, M., Wilkins, G., Mazzella, J., & Mangram, J. (1994). Inclusion models: Staffing patterns: Task Force Report. Available from Special Projects Materials, Syracuse University, 150 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, New York, 13244-2280.